DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 371 CE 082 410

TITLE	Australian Adult and Community Education (ACE) Statistics, 2000: An Overview. Australian Vocational Education and Training.
INSTITUTION	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook (Australia).
SPONS AGENCY	Australian National Training Authority, Melbourne.
ISBN	ISBN-0-87397-760-2
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	30p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 252 Kensington Road, Leabrook, South Australia 5068, Australia (cat. no. 637; $21.45 Australian). Tel: 08 8333 8400; Fax: 08 8331 9211; e-mail: vet req@ncver.edu.au; Web site: http://www.ncver.edu.au. For full text: http://www.ncver.edu.au/statistics/aag/ace2000/ace00.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Adult Learning; *Adult Programs; Adult Students; Annual Reports; *Community Education; Comparative Analysis; Conventional Instruction; Course Content; Course Selection (Students); Definitions; Delivery Systems; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Attainment; Educational Demand; Educational Supply; *Educational Trends; Employment Level; Employment Patterns; Enrollment Trends; Foreign Countries; Geographic Location; Informal Education; Outcomes of Education; Postsecondary Education; Sex Differences; *Student Characteristics; Tables (Data); Trend Analysis; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia; Australian Qualifications Framework; TAFE (Australia)

ABSTRACT

Of the 477,800 students reported to Australia's national vocational education and training (VET) data collection in 2000, 237,900 were enrolled in a vocational adult and community education (ACE) program. More than 70% of the latter individuals undertook informal training. Vocational ACE programs accounted for 49.8% of all ACE students and nearly 70% of ACE annual hours. Females constituted 66.7% of students in vocational ACE. Courses leading to Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications or the equivalent accounted for 64.1% of all annual hours in vocational ACE. The two main providers of nonvocational ACE programs were publicly funded training providers and technical and further education and other government providers. The total number of ACE students in 2000 was 3.8% lower than in 1999; however, the number of annual hours was up by 2.8% from 20.6 million to 21.2 million. The number of students in formal vocational ACE in 2000 fell by 2.8% from 1999, whereas the number in informal vocational ACE increased by 4.4%. ACE students came from a diverse range of educational backgrounds and were less likely to be unemployed than VET students. (Twenty-two tables/figures are included. The following items are appended: an overview of ACE in Australia's states/territories, different definitions of ACE across Australia's states/territories, and a glossary.) (MN)

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an **overview**

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Australian adult and community education (ACE)

Australian vocational education and training

Published by
National Centre for Vocational
Education Research Ltd
ABN 87 007 967 311
for the
Australian National Training Authority

© NCVER 2001

ISBN 0 87397 760 2 print
ISBN 0 87397 761 0 web
TD/TNC 67.09

Published by the National Centre
for Vocational Education Research
252 Kensington Road
Leabrook SA 5068, AUSTRALIA.
www.ncver.edu.au

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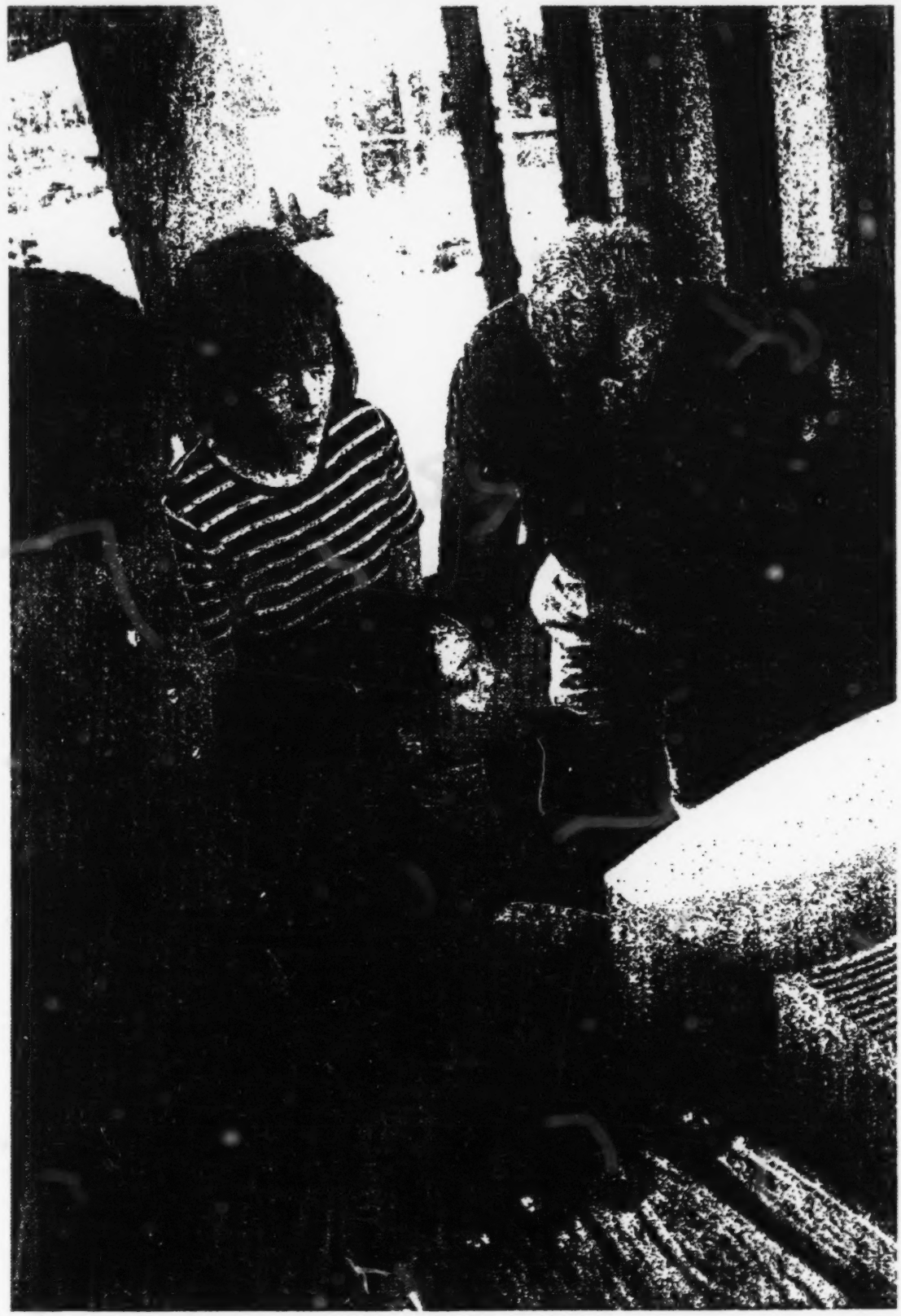

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Adult and community education (ACE) in Australia contributes significantly to providing Australians with vocational and non-vocational education and training through a variety of programs and courses and encompasses a great variety of training providers and community-based or community-managed organisations.

Some of these providers receive government funding from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent and specific-purpose allocations for vocational education and training (VET), some from other State/Territory departments like Departments for Human Services or equivalent, some from local governments, while others provide training on a fee-for-service basis. Volunteers also deliver some ACE programs.

Partly because of this diversity, the reporting on ACE activity in Australia is a difficult task. Currently there is no national standard for reporting ACE data and no obligation for providers to supply data on ACE activity to a national ACE collection, except for that part which attracts public funding for VET purposes. This is the only part of ACE activity, which is currently reported to the national VET data collection and is included in the *ACE statistics 2000 overview*.

Using a very broad definition which covers adult learning provided through community groups, universities of the third age, local churches and other organisations, NCVER estimates that in 2000 approximately 1.1 million to 1.3 million people, or 7.5% to 8.5% of Australia's adult population, were enrolled in some form of ACE. This ACE activity amounted to an estimated 25 to 30 million hours of learning. This level of activity is virtually unchanged from that estimated for 1999. Of these 1.3 million people, the national VET data collection captured the training activity of almost half a million people (figure 1).

Official and working definitions of what constitutes ACE vary among States and Territories and major ACE stakeholders. Views on the definition of ACE range from education, training and related services provided by community-based and community-managed organisations only, to all post-compulsory training and education that contributes to the process of lifelong learning.

In this publication, ACE is defined as:

- all educational and training activity (i.e. vocational and non-vocational) which is delivered by community-based or community-managed organisations that provide learning opportunities for adults and receive public funding and
- non-vocational educational and training activity which is delivered by TAFE institutes and other VET providers in receipt of public funding.

Highlights of 2000 ACE activity

Size and structure of the ACE sector

This publication distinguishes between two types of Australia's ACE activity:

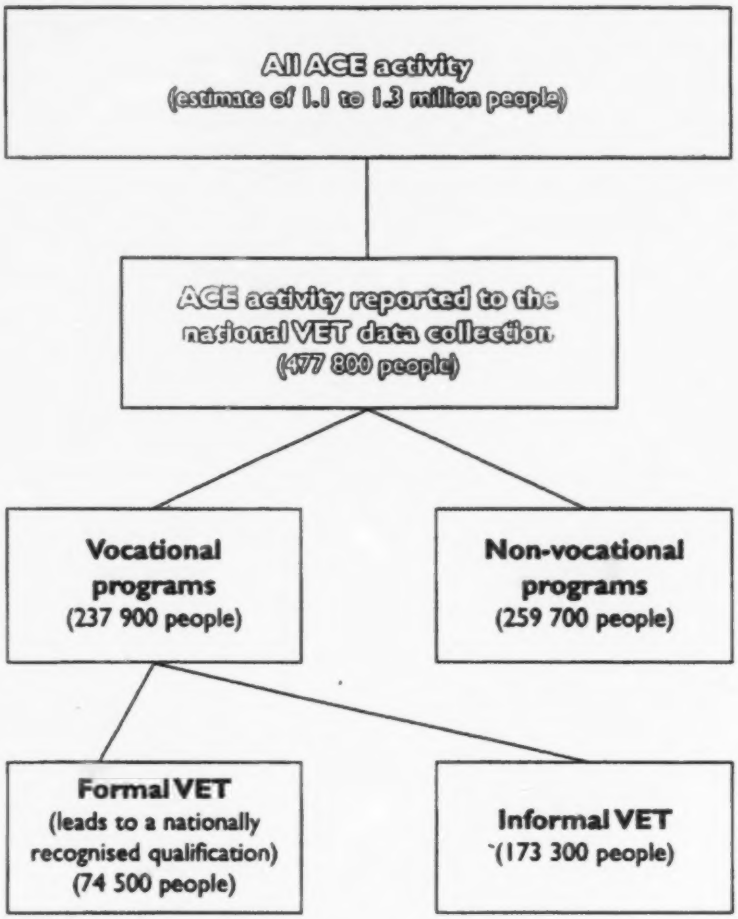
- ***vocational*** **programs, which have a vocational focus and are designed to equip students with specific professional skills and**
- ***non-vocational*** programs, which contribute to the overall personal, cultural and social development of an individual (figure 1).

Additionally, within vocational ACE, this overview distinguishes between two types of training programs:

- *formal* programs, which may lead to a qualification recognised under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or other certificates and
- *informal* programs, which do not result in attainment of a recognised qualification.

Of the 477 800 students reported to the national VET data collection, just under half (237 900) were enrolled in a vocational ACE program. Of these, over 70% (173 300 people) undertook informal training (figure 1).

Figure 1: ACE structure 2000[1]



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[1] *In the chart, the number of people in vocational and non-vocational VET programs does not add up to the total number of ACE students reported in the national VET collection as some students may enrol in both vocational and non-vocational ACE programs. Similarly, the number of people in formal and informal VET programs does not add up to the total number of people in vocational programs.*

Vocational and non-vocational ACE programs

The distinction between the two types of ACE programs (vocational and non-vocational) is based on their curricular intent (or expected vocational outcome).

Vocational ACE programs

Vocational ACE programs, which in 2000 accounted for almost half of all ACE students (49.8%)[2] and almost 70% of ACE annual hours, are designed to:

- develop specific vocational skills
- impart knowledge required in specific professional contexts
- prepare students for entering vocational programs through providing general skills in literacy, communication, language, etc.

The skills ACE students receive through vocational training enable them to:

- gain a nationally recognised qualification
- enter or re-enter the workforce
- retrain for a new career or
- upgrade their skills for an existing job

In vocational ACE in 2000:

- Females made up 66.7% of all students, a smaller proportion than in non-vocational ACE (72.7%).
- Males made up a larger proportion of students (33.3%) than in non-vocational ACE (27.3%).
- Young people (15 to 19-year-olds) represented a larger proportion (8.3%) of students than in non-vocational ACE (4.3%).
- Courses that lead to AQF qualifications or equivalent accounted for almost two thirds (64.1%) of all annual hours in vocational ACE, which compares to 88.1% in all VET.
- Courses that lead to certificates I,II and III accounted for almost 80% of all annual hours in courses that lead to AQF qualifications or equivalent, a considerably higher proportion than for all VET (59.1%).
- Formal vocational programs (i.e. programs that may lead to a recognised qualification) attracted over 30% of 237 900 vocational ACE students (table 1).
- Informal vocational programs (i.e. programs that comprise non-award courses and module-enrolment-only activity) accounted for over 70% of students enrolled in vocational ACE programs (table 1).

[2] *The percentages for vocational and non-vocational students add up to more than 100% because some students may enrol in both vocational and non-vocational ACE programs.*

Table 1: ACE activity by program type, 2000

	Students		Annual hours	
	'000	%	'000	%
Vocational programs	237.9	49.8	14 628.2	69.1
Formal	*74.5*	*15.6*	*9 547.5*	*45.1*
Informal	*173.3*	*36.3*	*5 080.7*	*24.0*
Non-vocational programs	259.7	54.4	6 530.6	30.9
All ACE*	**477.8**	**100.0**	**21 158.8**	**100.0**

*Note: The number of students does not add up to the total as some students may be enrolled in more than one ACE program.

Vocational ACE training activity described in this publication is delivered by a variety of community-based or community-managed training providers in receipt of public funds.

Non-vocational programs

Non-vocational programs are designed to impart skills traditionally associated with recreational or personal enrichment activities. However, this classification is in some ways ambiguous, because some of the non-vocational courses (e.g. computing, communication or languages), though not specifically designed to equip students with vocational skills, may provide a valuable basis for vocational training in the future.

In 2000, the non-vocational ACE sector attracted more than half (54.4%) of all ACE students but accounted for less than one third (30.9%) of all ACE annual hours. This shows that non-vocational ACE students are more likely than vocational ACE students and all VET students to study part-time or undertake short courses.

Non-vocational ACE programs described in this publication are delivered by:

- community publicly-funded training providers, which in 2000 delivered the bulk of non-vocational ACE activity and accounted for 76.2% of students and 82.0% of annual hours (table 2) and
- TAFE and other government providers, who provided training to 23.8% of students and accounted for 18.0% of annual hours.

Other registered providers reporting to the national VET data collection (e.g. private providers, some schools and higher education institutions) played only a marginal role in the delivery of non-vocational ACE activity in 2000.

Table 2: Percentage of non-vocational ACE students and annual hours by provider type, 2000

Providers	Students	Annual hours
Community-based or community-managed organisations	76.2	82.0
TAFE and other government providers	23.8	18.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**259.7**	**6 530.6**

ACE population

This publication covers only those ACE students who were undertaking training at a publicly funded provider that reported to the national VET data collection. In 2000:

- Around 477 800 students participated in ACE, a decrease on 496 500 in 1999. However, the amount of training activity undertaken by ACE students remained stable, at around 21 million annual hours.
- About half of ACE students were enrolled in a vocational ACE program, and over one in seven of these students (72.8%) undertook informal training.

Overall ACE students, when compared with all VET students, are:

- more likely to be female
- on average older
- slightly more likely to reside in a capital city
- less likely to be still attending secondary school

Table 3: Comparison of ACE students and all VET students by selected characteristics*, 2000

Characteristic	ACE students (%)	All VET students (%)
Females	69.5	49.2
Young students (15–19-year-olds)	6.4	22.0
Mature-age students (35 years and older)	64.1	40.5
Residing in a capital city	61.2	57.4
Residing in a rural/remote area	32.7	34.2
At secondary school	2.7	8.1
Total number of students ('000)	477.8	1 749.4

*Note: Percentages shown in this table are based on the data for students who provided required information. Students who have not provided any information have been excluded.

Trends in ACE

In 2000, the total number of ACE students appears to have declined by 3.8% over 1999, from 496 500 to 477 800 students. However, the number of annual hours increased by 2.8%, from 20.6 million to 21.2 million. The decline in student numbers was reported for both parts of the ACE sector, vocational and non-vocational (table 4).[3]

- Student numbers in vocational ACE fell by 2.8% (from 244 900 in 1999 to 237 900 in 2000), while annual hours rose by 5.7%, from 13.8 million in 1999 to 14.6 million in 2000. Proportionally to all ACE, vocational ACE sector remained stable, at around 50% of students.

[3] *Caution should be exercised when interpreting the trends in ACE in general and between 1999 and 2000 in particular, as the reported data can reflect a change in scope for different providers rather than a change in actual training activity. Thus, the decline in students numbers reported to the national VET data collection in 2000 is partly due to one of the major ACE providers, who reported a significant amount of data in 1999, not submitting any data in 2000. Also, due to a reclassification, some of the vocational activity that was considered part of ACE in 1999 was out of scope in 2000.*

- The figures reported for vocational ACE reveal the tendency of ACE students to enrol in informal rather than formal vocational ACE programs. In 2000, the number of students in formal VET has fallen by a significant 16.3%, while in informal VET it rose by 4.4%. As a proportion of all vocational ACE students, informal VET has grown by 5.0 percentage points, while informal VET decreased by 4.5 percentage points.
- Student numbers in non-vocational ACE programs fell by 5.7%, from 275 500 in 1999 to 259 700 in 2000. As a proportion of all ACE, non-vocational ACE remained about the same as in 1999, at around 55%.
- Annual hours in non-vocational ACE dropped slightly, by 3.1%, from 6.7 million in 1999 to 6.5 million in 2000.

Table 4: ACE students and annual hours by program type ('000), 1999 and 2000

Vocational programs	**1999**	**2000**	**% change**
Students ('000)*	244.9	237.9	-2.8
Formal VET	89.0	74.5	-16.3
Informal VET	166.0	173.3	4.4
Annual hours ('000)	13 833.7	14 628.2	5.7
Formal VET	8 409.6	9 547.5	13.5
Informal VET	5 424.1	5 080.7	-6.3
Non-vocational programs			
Students ('000)	275.5	259.7	-5.7
Annual hours ('000)	6 739.6	6 530.6	-3.1
All ACE students*	**496.5**	**477.8**	**-3.8**
All ACE annual hours	**20 573.3**	**21 158.8**	**2.8**

*Note: The number of students does not add up to the total as some students may be enrolled in different types of ACE programs.

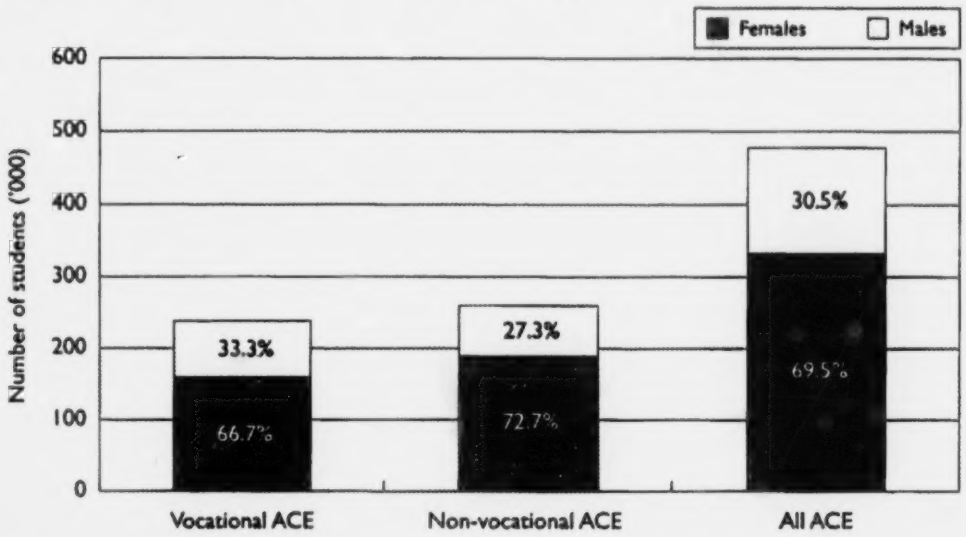
STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Sex and age

ACE programs attract male and female students of all ages. However, on average, ACE students are more likely to be female and older than the overall VET student population. In 2000:

- Female ACE students considerably outnumbered males (69.5% to 30.5%). This compares with the even sex distribution in VET, with 50.8% males and 49.2% females (figure 2).
- Females outnumbered males in both vocational and non-vocational parts of the ACE sector. However, the proportion of females was considerably larger in non-vocational ACE (72.7%) than in vocational ACE (66.7%).

Figure 2: ACE students by sex and by program type, 2000[*]



- ACE training activity was characterised by a very flat and broad age distribution. This contrasts with VET, where a pronounced peak can be observed at around the age of 18 to 19 years (figure 3).
- The median age of ACE students was significantly higher than that of VET students (40.0 years compared to 29.2 years).
- The average age of ACE students was 41.5 years. This is again considerably higher than the average age of all VET students (32.5 years), even though in recent years VET students on average became older.

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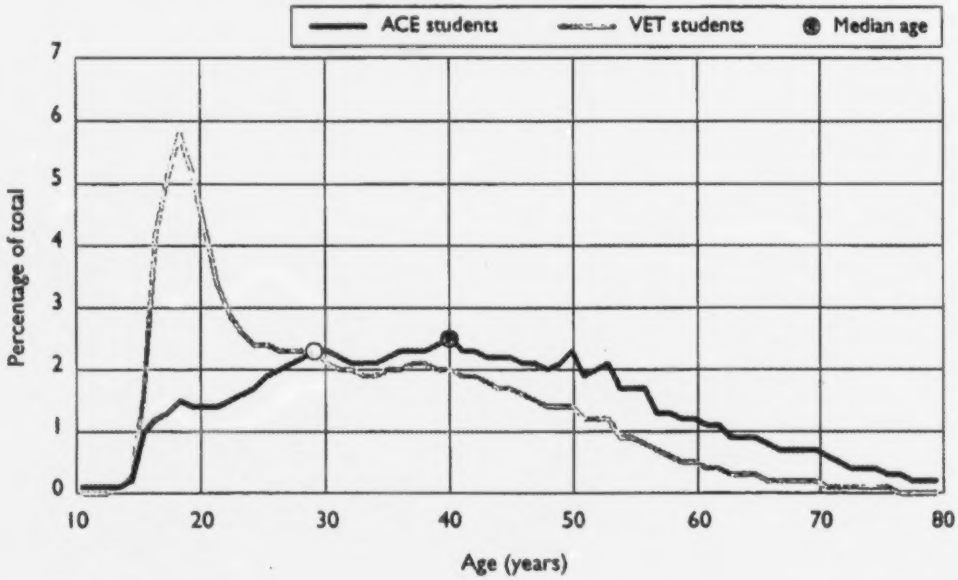
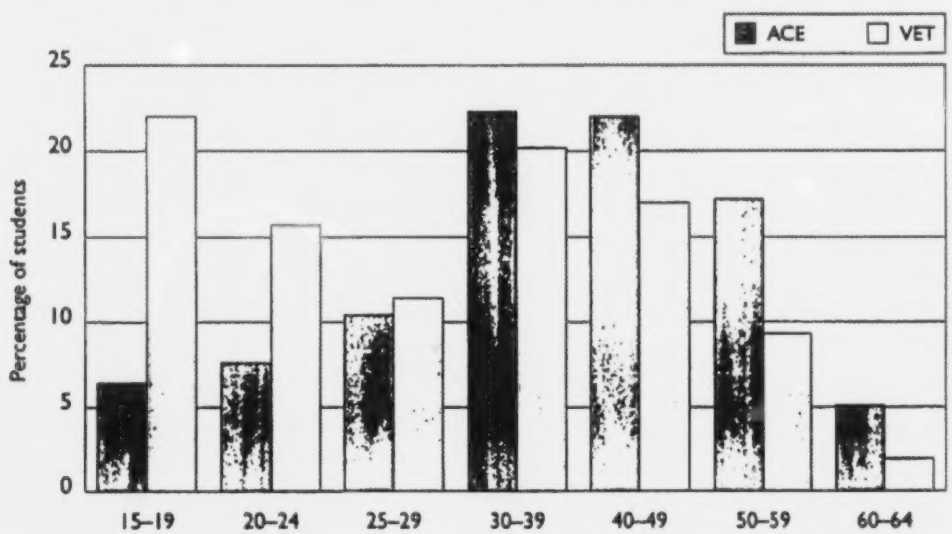
[*] *The figures shown in the graph have been calculated by pro-rating the data for 'unknown' sex.*

Figure 3: Age distribution for ACE and VET students, 2000



- Young students (15–19-year-olds) represented only 6.4% of all ACE students. In contrast, this age group represented the highest proportion (22.0%) of all VET students (figure 4).
- The highest proportion of ACE students was represented by the 30–39-year-olds cohort (22.3%) which is comparable with all VET (20.2%).
- Mature-age students (30 years old and over) were much better represented in ACE than in VET (74.9% compared to 50.5%).

Figure 4: Percentage of ACE and VET students by age group, 2000[3]



[3] *The figures shown in the graph have been calculated by pro-rating the data for the 'unknown' age. Also, the graph does not include the data for age groups below 15 and over 64 years.*

Residence

Students from all geographic regions[6] in Australia participate in ACE programs. However, like all VET students, ACE students are more likely to live in a capital city or other metropolitan area than in any other area. Also, non-vocational students are much more likely to live in those areas than vocational ACE students (table 5). In 2000:

- More than two thirds (67.3%) of all ACE students resided in a city or other metropolitan areas. For non-vocational ACE students this percentage was considerably higher (73.6%) than for vocational ACE students (59.8%).
- Almost one third (32.7%) of all ACE students lived in rural and remote areas. In VET, the corresponding percentage was very close (34.2%). Students from rural and remote areas were better represented in vocational (40.2%) than in non-vocational ACE (26.4%).

Table 5: Percentage of students by geographic region and program type, 2000

	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Capital city	52.6	68.5	61.2	57.4
Other metropolitan	7.2	5.1	6.1	7.4
Rural/remote	40.2	26.4	32.7	34.2
Overseas	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	231.7	256.0	468.1	1 713.2
Unknown ('000)	6.2	3.7	9.7	36.1
Total ('000)	**237.9**	**259.7**	**477.8**	**1 749.4**

Patterns of participation in non-vocational programs across the four major geographic regions identified in table 5 vary considerably for different training providers[7] (table 6).

- The majority (86.3%) of non-vocational ACE students enrolled with TAFE or other government providers live in a capital city. This compares with 62.9% for community providers.
- Students enrolled with community providers are more likely to live in rural and remote areas (30.6%) than students enrolled with TAFE and other government providers (12.9%).

[6] *A classification developed to provide geographic information about students. It is based on mapping the student's residential postcode to the regional classifications adopted by the Department of Primary Industries and Energy (DPIE) and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).*

[7] *Information for vocational ACE students by geographic region and provider type is not provided here because all vocational ACE reported in this publication is mainly delivered by community providers.*

Table 6: Percentage of students in non-vocational programs, by training provider and geographic region, 2000

	TAFE and other govt	Community	All non-vocational
Capital city	86.3	62.9	68.5
Other metropolitan	0.7	6.5	5.1
Rural/remote	12.9	30.6	26.4
Overseas	0.1	0.0	0.0
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	61.4	194.6	256.0
Unknown ('000)	0.3	3.4	3.7
Total ('000)	**61.8**	**197.9**	**259.7**

Educational background[a]

Students who undertake ACE training come from a diverse range of educational backgrounds. Since ACE students are on average older than all VET students, they are much less likely to be still attending secondary school. In 2000, of all ACE students who provided information on their secondary school status, around 3% were still attending school which compares to over 8% for all VET students (table 7).

Table 7: Percentage of students by school status and program type, 2000

	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Still at secondary school	3.2	2.1	2.7	8.1
Not at secondary school	96.8	97.9	97.3	91.9
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	117.4	102.2	211.8	1 272.0
Unknown ('000)	120.5	157.5	266.0	477.4
Total ('000)	**237.9**	**259.7**	**477.8**	**1 749.4**

ACE students appear to be more likely to have some kind of post-secondary prior education than VET students (table 8). In 2000, around half of all ACE students (45.0%) who provided information on their prior education had completed some kind of post-secondary education prior to starting ACE. The percentage of students with prior post-secondary education appears to be higher in non-vocational programs than in vocational programs (48.2% and 43.2% respectively).

[a] *The information on the educational background of ACE students presented in this section should be interpreted with caution as it contains a high percentage of unknown data.*

Table 8: Percentage of ACE students by the highest level of prior educational achievement and program type, 2000

	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Degree or post-graduate diploma	7.8	10.5	8.9	6.6
Associate or undergraduate diploma	4.2	5.7	4.8	4.2
Trade/technician certificate	5.5	4.9	5.3	9.5
Other certificate	14.3	13.9	13.9	12.6
Unspecified post-secondary education	11.5	13.1	12.1	2.4
Year 12	16.0	10.9	13.9	24.4
Year 10 or 11	32.8	37.5	35.1	31.1
Year 9 or lower	7.9	3.4	6.0	9.3
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	119.4	95.6	205.4	1 214.1
Unknown ('000)	118.5	164.2	272.4	535.3
Total ('000)	**237.9**	**259.7**	**477.8**	**1 749.4**

Employment status[1]

There is some indication that ACE students in general are less likely to be unemployed than all VET students (table 9). In 2000:

- The unemployment rate for all ACE students who had provided information on their employment status was about 15%, while for all VET students it appears to be much higher, at around 22%.
- ACE students undertaking non-vocational programs showed a much lower unemployment rate (around 8%) than vocational ACE students, whose unemployment rate (around 20%) was close to that of all VET students.
- ACE students, especially in the non-vocational sector, seem less likely to be in the labour force than VET students.

Table 9: Percentage of students by employment status and program type, 2000

Employment status	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Employed	63.7	70.3	66.4	67.5
Unemployed	15.8	5.9	11.8	18.7
Unemployment rate	*19.9*	*7.7*	*15.1*	*21.7*
Not in labour force	20.5	23.8	21.8	13.8
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	162.2	117.4	266.9	1 246.7
Unknown ('000)	75.7	142.4	210.9	502.7
Total ('000)	**237.9**	**259.7**	**477.8**	**1 749.4**

[1] *The information on the employment status of ACE students presented in this section should be interpreted with caution as it contains a high percentage of unknown data.*

TRAINING ACTIVITY

Delivery of training

ACE training programs are characterised by flexibility and easy access as they allow students to choose the most suitable training option in a variety of settings: at a college/campus, at a workplace, in a community centre, on-line or through remote access. As in VET, the bulk of ACE training is college/campus-based. In 2000:

- Training undertaken at a college/campus accounted for 83.8% of total ACE annual hours, which compares to 84.4% of VET hours (table 10).
- Almost all non-vocational ACE training (95.2% of annual hours) and over three quarters of vocational ACE training (78.7% of hours) was delivered at a college/campus.
- A small amount of ACE training, mainly in vocational programs, was delivered on-line (2.1% of all ACE annual hours), which compares to 4.1% for all VET.
- Employment-based training accounted for 6.4% of annual hours in vocational ACE programs and for only 1.5% of hours in non-vocational programs. This compares to 4.8% of hours for all VET.

Table 10: Percentage of annual hours by delivery type and program type, 2000

Delivery type	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
College/campus-based delivery	78.7	95.2	83.8	84.4
On-line and remote access	2.8	0.4	2.1	4.1
Employment-based	6.4	1.5	4.9	4.8
Other	12.1	2.8	9.2	6.7
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	14 486.4	6 526.6	21 013.0	326 004.4
Unknown ('000)	141.8	4.0	145.9	20 135.4
Total ('000)	**14 628.2**	**6 530.6**	**21 158.8**	**346 139.8**

Most of the non-vocational ACE training was college/campus-based.[10] In non-vocational programs delivered in 2000, 97.9% of non-vocational training hours delivered by TAFE and other government providers and 94.6% delivered by community providers were college/campus-based (table 11).

[10] *The amount of data reported for non-vocational ACE activity delivered by other providers in 2000 was relatively small (around 400 annual hours).*

Table 11: Percentage of non-vocational ACE annual hours by training delivery type and provider, 2000[11]

Training delivery type	TAFE and other government	Community providers	Total non-vocational ACE programs
College/campus-based delivery	97.9	94.6	95.2
On-line and remote access	0.6	0.4	0.4
Employment-based	0.8	1.6	1.5
Other	0.6	3.3	2.8
Total known (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total known ('000)	1 173.6	5 352.6	6 526.6
Unknown ('000)	3.1	0.9	4.0
Total ('000)	**1 176.7**	**5 353.5**	**6 530.6**

ACE courses

ACE offers a variety of courses that reflect the requirements of both industry and individuals. However, in contrast to VET, ACE students are much more likely to enrol in separate modules not associated with any course. In 2000, module-only enrolments accounted for one third (33.3%) of annual hours undertaken by non-vocational ACE students and for over 20% of annual hours undertaken by vocational ACE students. This is in contrast to VET, where module-only activity contributed only 1.1% of all hours (table 12).

Those ACE students who enrol in courses have an opportunity to choose from a wide range of fields of study.[12] Most popular choices among students in vocational programs are courses associated with such fields of study as:

- *VET multi-field education*, designed to provide general skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy, and communication), which accounted for 24.3% of annual hours
- *Business, administration and economics* (15.4% of annual hours)
- *Health and community services* (10.8% of annual hours)

Students in non-vocational programs predominantly enrol into courses associated with such fields of study as:

- *Art, humanities and social sciences* (21.2% of annual hours) which encompasses such courses as crafts, art, pottery, calligraphy, music, dance and drama, and photography
- *VET multi-field education* (14.3% of annual hours)
- *Health and community services* (11.7% of annual hours)

[11] *The information on students by delivery type and training provider for the vocational part of ACE is not provided here because, by definition, vocational ACE programs described in this publication are delivered by community providers.*

[12] Field of study *is a classification of courses based on their major intended vocational outcome and content.*

Table 12: Percentage of annual hours by field of study and program type, 2000

Field of study	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Land & marine resources, animal husbandry	1.3	0.9	1.2	4.6
Architecture, building	1.0	1.8	1.3	6.5
Art, humanities & social sciences	7.9	21.2	12.0	8.2
Business, administration, economics	15.4	4.4	12.0	20.2
Education	4.0	0.3	2.9	1.8
Engineering, surveying	1.9	2.4	2.0	14.6
Health, community services	10.8	11.7	11.1	8.4
Law, legal studies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Science	5.0	6.9	5.6	6.9
Veterinary science, animal care	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3
Services, hospitality, transportation	6.4	2.7	5.3	12.5
VET multi-field education	24.3	14.3	21.2	14.2
Modules only	21.7	33.3	25.3	1.1
Total (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**14 628.2**	**6 530.6**	**21 158.8**	**346 139.8**

Courses undertaken by ACE students can lead to different qualifications. However, in non-vocational programs, almost all training activity (97.7% of annual hours) was associated with non-award courses, i.e. courses that do not lead to any qualification. Non-award courses also accounted for a significant proportion of annual hours (13.0%) in vocational ACE (table 13).

Though vocational ACE students, unlike non-vocational ACE students, enrol in a wide range of qualifications, their qualification profile is considerably different from that of all VET students. Vocational ACE students are less likely to enrol in AQF qualifications and much more likely to enrol in separate subjects not associated with any qualification. In 2000:

- AQF or equivalent qualifications accounted for 64.1% of annual hours in vocational ACE, compared to 88.1% reported for all VET students (table 13).
- Training activity associated with enrolments in individual subjects accounted for over one fifth of all annual hours (21.7%) in vocational ACE and only for 1.1% in all VET.

Table 13: Percentage of annual hours for vocational ACE[13] and all VET by qualification type, 2000

	Vocational ACE programs	All VET
AQF qualifications or equivalent	64.1	88.1
Other recognised courses	1.2	3.5
Non-award courses	13.0	7.2
Subject-only (no qualification)	21.7	1.1
Total (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**14 628.2**	**346 139.8**

Also, vocational ACE students are much less likely than all VET students to enrol in courses that lead to higher level qualifications. In 2000, of all vocational ACE activity that led to an AQF qualification or equivalent:

- Only 4.0% was undertaken in courses that led to a diploma or above qualification, in contrast to 24.0% for all VET (table 14).
- More than a half (56.7%) was associated with courses that led to lower level qualifications (certificates I and II), a much higher proportion than for all VET (29.4%).
- A slightly smaller proportion of annual hours than in all VET (22.9% compared to 29.7%) was associated with courses that led to certificate III qualification or equivalent.

Table 14: Percentage of annual hours for vocational ACE and for all VET by AQF qualification, 2000[14]

AQF qualification	Vocational ACE programs	All VET
Diploma or higher	4.0	24.0
Certificate IV or equivalent	12.9	14.1
Certificate III or equivalent	22.9	29.7
Unknown level	3.5	2.5
Certificate II	36.2	21.8
Certificate I	20.5	7.6
Senior secondary	0.0	0.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Total AQF ('000)	9 376.8	305 103.3
% of total	64.1	88.1
Total ('000)	**14 628.2**	**346 139.8**

[13] *The data on non-vocational programs are not included in this table because most of the training activity in non-vocational programs does not lead to any qualification, and the data that are available are not reliable to draw any valid conclusions.*

[14] *The data on non-vocational programs are not included in this table because most of the training activity in non-vocational programs (99.0% of annual hours) is not associated with any qualification.*

Subjects

Students' preferences in terms of subject choice were different in the vocational and non-vocational parts of ACE (table 15). In 2000:

- The most popular choices among vocational ACE students were the subjects from such areas of study as *social education and employment skills* (22.4% of enrolments), *maths and computing* (21.6%) and *administration, business, economics and law* (16.7%). The same three areas of learning, with a slightly different ranking, were most popular with VET students as well.
- Non-vocational ACE students' favourite subjects in 2000 were from the *visual/performing arts*, which attracted 26.5% of all subject enrolments, *hospitality tourism and personal services* (23.3%), and the *humanities* (11.1%).

Table 15: Percentage of subject enrolments by areas of learning and program type, 2000

Field of study	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Humanities	8.0	11.1	9.2	5.4
Social studies	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0
Education	4.3	4.7	4.5	1.9
Sciences	1.3	1.6	1.4	2.3
Maths, computing	21.6	8.4	16.4	14.9
Visual/performing arts	3.0	26.5	12.3	2.7
Engineering, processing	1.9	2.8	2.3	10.6
Health sciences	11.5	4.5	8.7	10.4
Administration, business, economics, law	16.7	3.9	11.6	20.2
Built environment	0.8	3.5	1.9	4.4
Agriculture, renewable resources	1.8	3.0	2.2	3.7
Hospitality, tourism & personal services	6.0	23.3	12.9	9.6
Social education & employment skills	22.4	5.7	15.8	12.8
Total (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	568.3	371.7	940.0	12 292.7

Training outcomes

ACE training activity is characterised by a high proportion of successful outcomes.[15] In 2000:

- Most of the subject enrolments that were assessed resulted in successful outcomes (90.8% for vocational programs and 93.4% for non-vocational programs). In comparison, in the VET sector, 86.5% of all assessed subject enrolments led to a successful outcome (table 17).

[15] *Caution should be taken when applying training outcomes as they are measured in the AVETMISS to ACE because they may not be adequate for a lot of ACE activity.*

➢ The proportion of subject enrolments that were assessed as *failed* was lower for ACE than for all VET. In vocational programs failed subject enrolments made up 9.2% of all assessed ACE enrolments and in non-vocational programs only 6.6% of enrolments, whereas in VET, 13.5% of assessed subject enrolments resulted in a failed outcome.

Table 16: Percentage of subject enrolments by subject outcome and program type, 2000

Outcome	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Assessed – passed	41.0	2.7	25.8	61.5
Assessed – fail	4.2	0.2	2.6	9.9
Not assessed – not completed	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.4
Not assessed – satisfactorily completed	37.3	78.4	53.6	6.2
Continuing studies	5.5	0.4	3.4	6.1
Recognition of prior learning	0.8	0.0	0.5	2.5
Credit transfer	0.4	0.0	0.2	3.8
Withdrawn	7.3	9.0	8.0	8.1
Unknown	2.9	8.9	5.2	1.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total ('000)	**568.3**	**371.7**	**940.0**	**12 292.7**

Table 17: Success in training: percentage of assessed subject enrolments by subject outcome and program type, 2000

Outcome (of assessed enrolments)	Vocational ACE programs	Non-vocational ACE programs	All ACE	All VET
Successful	90.8	93.4	90.9	86.5
Passed	*89.1*	*92.8*	*89.2*	*83.2*
Recognition of prior learning	*1.7*	*0.6*	*1.7*	*3.3*
Unsuccessful (failed)	9.2	6.6	9.1	13.5
Total assessed (%)	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total assessed ('000)	**261.3**	**10.6**	**271.9**	**9 083.6**

APPENDICES

States and Territories at a glance

Reporting information on ACE varies quite considerably among the States and Territories. Some jurisdictions, like Western Australia or the Northern Territory, have hardly any reporting mechanisms for ACE in place. The national VET data collection, therefore, only contains a small amount of information on ACE activity in those States/Territories. Other jurisdictions, like Victoria and New South Wales, have established their ACE data collections which they regularly update. As a result, only New South Wales and Victoria, and to a lesser extent South Australia and Tasmania, report the bulk of their ACE activity to the national VET data collection.

The analysis of the ACE data available to NCVER through the national VET data collection has revealed that ACE students characteristics are broadly similar across Australia's States and Territories. Table 18 provides a summary of information on student participation in ACE for different States and Territories. Because of the inconsistencies and irregularities in ACE reporting among the States and Territories, the comparative analysis of ACE information at the State level should be interpreted with caution.

Table 18: ACE students by State and program type, 2000

Program type	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
					('000)				
Vocational	115.2	107.4	1.7	7.9	0.9	3.3	1.5	0.1	237.9
Non-vocational	105.1	101.9	0.0	0.0	31.5	20.1	0.0	1.1	259.7
All ACE students*	**209.0**	**201.7**	**1.7**	**7.9**	**32.4**	**22.4**	**1.5**	**1.1**	**477.8**
Percentage of Australia	**43.7**	**42.2**	**0.4**	**1.7**	**6.8**	**4.7**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**100.0**
					Percentage				
Females	69.7	70.4	51.5	72.8	65.3	67.6	53.5	71.4	69.5
Males	30.3	29.6	48.5	27.2	34.7	32.4	46.5	28.6	30.5

*Note: The number of students does not add up to the total because some students may enrol in both vocational and non-vocational courses.

Different definitions of ACE across Australian States/Territories

New South Wales

In terms of the *NSW ACE policy—recognising the value of lifelong learning for all*, ACE is:

- education and training provided by independent, non-government, non-profit, community owned and managed organisations
- provides learning opportunities for adults in the broad areas of general, vocational, basic and community education
- responds to the broad vocational needs of the community by offering an alternative entry point to the VET system
- offers flexible locally based delivery of accredited and non-accredited courses for unemployed people and those already in the workforce

Victoria

In terms of the *Guidelines and conditions for eligibility and registration of ACE organisations*, status as an ACE organisation is defined in the following way:

- is incorporated or has a deed of delegation from an incorporated organisation or is acting under the auspices of an incorporated organisation
- has a major focus on providing educational programs to meet the needs of Victorian adults
- is managed by and responsive to the community which it serves
- is not a TAFE institute, university, commercial provider or industry provider
- is not for profit—defined as meaning that the rules of the organisation prevent: (a) members of the organisation or its governing body receiving remuneration as members; (b) the distribution of any of the organisation's revenue or property to members of the organisation or its governing body

As defined in the ACE Strategic Plan, the ACE sector is flexible and innovative, locally responsive and accessible and defined by its self-determining status.

ACE is learner-centred, has education as its core, is community-owned and driven, values and promotes diversity, is adaptive, responsive and innovative.

In Victoria the term ACE sector refers only to community-owned and managed adult education.

Queensland

Generally, ACE is both informal and formal learning delivered to the community by the community in ways that best suit the participants.

South Australia

The definition of ACE is aligned to the *National ACE Policy 1997*, i.e. ACE is characterised as learner-centred, responsive to the community, accessible and inclusive, diverse, varied and flexible.

There is no State-specific definition of ACE. However, ACE providers are defined as those currently in receipt of State funds.

Western Australia

ACE is non-accredited courses such as Stream 1000 offered by TAFE colleges and a range of other formal or less formal learning initiatives.

Tasmania

ACE is characterised as being flexible, varied, diverse, accessible, inclusive, learner-centred and responsive to community needs.

Adult and community education is an activity oriented toward life-long learning which:

- makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs

- involves complex but coherent forms of co-operative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge
- is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university
- is fundamentally a learner-centred, needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants

However, the definition of ACE in Tasmania has become more problematic. Historically ACE was defined as programs which were situated in or administered by the now defunct Institute of Adult Education. The restructuring of TAFE and the institute has meant the institute programs still exist in TAFE Tasmania but now fall within a program area called *Access and learning*. In the past, access and bridging courses (Stream 2000) have not been counted as part of ACE mostly due to the location of the venue than the content or student group. This problem remains.

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory does not distinguish between ACE and VET providers.

Australian Capital Territory

Adult and community education is an activity oriented toward life-long learning which:

- makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs
- involves complex but coherent forms of co-operative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge
- is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university
- is fundamentally a learner-centred, needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

ACE	Adult and community education. This publication adopts a broad definition of ACE, to encompass vocational and non-vocational programs delivered by community providers, and all non-vocational programs delivered by post-secondary education and training providers. See also *Vocational programs* and *Non-vocational programs.*
Annual hours	Annual hours are used as a measure of total training delivery. They are based on nominal hours for each subject and represent the anticipated hours of supervised training under a traditional delivery strategy; although some students may undertake subjects in self-paced learning, flexible-delivery or distance-learning modes.
Area of learning	A broad category which comprises different discipline groups and classifies a subject (module) according to its major content matter.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	A nationally consistent framework of credentials offered in post-compulsory education and training.
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard.
Community education providers	Providers who identify themselves as community education providers and have a primary focus on education and training and who report to the national VET data collection.
Community centre	A place providing educational, social and recreational facilities for the community.
Delivery type	A categorisation of strategies used to provide a student with learning opportunities to allow him or her to achieve the knowledge or skills required to complete a subject (module).
Enrolment	Registration by a student with a training provider for the purpose of undertaking a course or a subject (module). The enrolment is considered valid only if all fee obligations have been met and the student has attended at least one lesson or submitted at least one unit of work.
Field of study	A classification of courses based on the major subject matter of its content.
Formal vocational programs	Vocational ACE programs which may lead to an award of a nationally recognised qualification under the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF).
Highest level of prior educational achievement	A category which indicates the student's highest prior education level derived on the basis of the student's highest prior post-secondary education or, in case no prior post-secondary education is reported, highest secondary school level completed.
Informal vocational programs	Vocational ACE programs which *do not* lead to an award of recognised qualification under the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF). See also *Formal vocational programs.*

National VET data collection	The regular collections of vocational education and training data undertaken by NCVER on behalf of ANTA. The collections comprise the annual collection of data from VET providers, the annual collection of State/Territory financial data, and the quarterly collection of apprenticeship and traineeship data. National data standards (see *AVETMISS*) govern all three collections.
Non-award course	A course which does not lead to a recognised qualification.
Non-vocational programs	The part of the ACE sector which delivers non-vocational training programs (i.e. programs with recreational, leisure and personal enrichment focus of their curricula) as opposed to vocational programs. See also *Vocational programs*.
Other government providers	Government-owned and managed education facilities/organisations, other than TAFE, which deliver VET (e.g. universities delivering VET).
Other providers	All the organisations, other than TAFE and community education providers, which receive public funds for the provision of VET (including registered private providers).
Public funding	In this report, refers to all State/Territory, Commonwealth and local government recurrent or specific purpose allocations for education and training, excluding funding for higher education, secondary education, primary education or pre-school education.
Qualification	Formal certification in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to the identified individual, industry or community needs. See also *Course*.
Qualification category	A classification for the qualification awarded to an individual on successful completion of a course.
Subject	A unit of training a student may enrol in and be formally assessed for.
Subject enrolment	The registration by a student with a training provider for the purpose of undertaking a module.
Subject outcome	A classification which describes the type of outcome which may be achieved by a student as a result of an enrolment in a module or unit of competency.
TAFE providers	TAFE training institutes/organisations which deliver training programs and report information to the national data collection.
Training organisation	An organisation which administers and/or delivers VET and reports information to the national data collection.
Training provider	An organisation which delivers ACE or VET programs. This publication provides information on training delivered by only those providers who receive public funding. They include the State and Territory TAFE systems, adult and community education providers and other registered providers (some schools, universities and private providers).

VET (vocational education and training), also VET program	Post-compulsory education and training, excluding degree and higher-level programs delivered by higher education organisations, which provides people with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. VET also includes programs which provide a basis for subsequent vocational programs.
Vocational programs	The part of the ACE sector which delivers training programs designed to equip students with vocational skills and knowledge that prepare them for the workplace. See also *Non-vocational programs*.

Australian adult and community education: An overview provides information on adult and community education delivered in 2000 by publicly-funded providers who report to the national VET data collection. In particular, it includes data on student numbers and characteristics, ACE training activity and training outcomes.

ISBN 0 87397 760 2 print edition
ISBN 0 87397 761 0 web edition